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SOURCE B.E.I.P.I. (Bulletin de l'Association d'Etudes et d'Informations politiques internationales)

NEW RUMANIAN FUEL RATION LAW

Comment: The following, taken from the 1 - 15 December 1952 issue of B.E.I.P.I., reports a new Rumanian law on fuel rationing and assigns a political and not an economic motive for the action.

On 1 November 1952, the Council of Ministers and the Central Committee of the Rumanian Workers' Party enacted a law for the rationing of fuel supplies. All buildings were classified in one of three categories:

1. Industrial enterprises, which receives heat as of 1 November.
2. Public buildings, hospitals, and meeting places, which receives heat according to their need.
3. Dwelling places, which receives heat "according to their needs," only between 1 December and 15 February.

Men working "for the interest of the masses" are excepted. These are: scientists, doctors, writers, journalists, architects, musicians, opera singers, and meritorious artists. Also exempt from strict fuel rations are Stakhanovites, socialist builders, and laborers and white-collar workers with large families.

The decree imposes heavy penalties on all those who obtain wood or coal on the black market, to the detriment of the national economy. Punishment consists of fines, revocation of dwelling permits, and 3-6 months' imprisonment.

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The restrictions created by the present ordinance cannot be justified as a measure of public economy, inasmuch as crude oil, wood, and natural gas are among the principal resources of the country. The reason for this action is political. Workers are forced to try to become Stakhanovites. White-collar workers attempt to enter the categories of "activists" and builders of socialism. The remainder of the population, which does not fall into any of these categories must spend hours watching Communist-propaganda motion pictures in order to pass some time in well-heated motion-picture houses.

In this manner, fuel serves as a political weapon in the hands of the Rumanian government.

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- 2 -

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